

The Art of Health Promotion

practical information to make programs more effective



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Well-Being: New Paradigms of Wellness— Inspiring Positive Health Outcomes and Renewing Hope

Donna Allen, PhD, CHES, FAWHP, Deb Carlson, PhD, and ‘Chelle Ham

Setting the Stage

We live in a society that has developed a taste for the highest possible return on investment in the shortest possible amount of time. Many economic indicators of well-being are readily available for our population, but they come with some grave shortcomings. To begin with, purely economic indicators linked to human capital, such as health care utilization profiles, cost/benefit analysis, and increase or decrease in economic return related to expected spending on health-related benefits (i.e., health plan cost, sick leave, Workers’ Compensation expense, and presenteeism) are often the driving forces in the implementation of organizational wellness efforts. These indicators alone frequently serve as our primary measure of employee health management effects and are often linked directly to workforce productivity and health management concerns.

In recent years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has launched a war on obesity, demonstrating statistically, state by state, that obesity in America has truly reached epidemic proportions. Furthermore, health risks, and chronic health conditions oftentimes measured in health risk appraisals and physical fitness assessments, require intervention specific to the underlying medical condition. Indeed, there is much benefit to reducing high health risks in at-risk individuals, and yet, although the national consciousness of health and fitness seems to be at an all-time high, there are also data suggesting that despite our efforts to improve health, we are not gaining much ground.¹

Community and nationwide awareness of the importance of becoming more active, including physical activity as a desired lifestyle norm, is a message that is becoming much more common. However, even with many public health pronouncements, community health education messages, statements of academicians and public figures, and for-profit and not-for-profit sector messages, we still continue to find challenges, barriers, and unresponsiveness among the 67.2% of Americans who do not exercise regularly.¹

Could there be new paradigms of well-being that are science based and theory driven, that could be implemented with a specific purpose to increase life satisfaction while identifying strengths, virtues, gifts, and talents, highlighting meaning and purpose to serve others—and improving both



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health status and economic return? We believe the answer is yes.

This edition of *The Art of Health Promotion* will seek to address these new paradigms and the science that undergirds them. We will include the following:

- What are the new frontiers of wellness?
- The changing paradigms of health
- The changing focus of health care
- Can changing your mind improve your health?
- Promoting strengths instead of weaknesses
- Expanding our definition of health
- The economy of well-being
- Some new principles of “good business”
- Practical applications for “well-being” in health promotion
- Conclusions

What Are These New Frontiers of Wellness?

Amidst all of the reams of data that exist on the value of physical well-being, there are emerging new frontiers, specifically those related to the field of positive psychology and the science of happiness. We believe that noneconomic measures of well-being lead to important conclusions that are not apparent from society-wide economic measures alone, such as adjusted per capita income. Although past decades have documented significant increases in economic output, there has been virtually no rise in life satisfaction during this period, and in fact there has been a substantial increase in the incidence of depression and distrust. Important noneconomic predictors of well-being of societies include social capital measures, democratic governance, and human rights.² A new frontier of wellness takes a close and meticulous look at happiness, the science of happiness, strengths and protective factors, resilience studies, and social capital analysis.

In the workplace, it is clear that noneconomic factors can influence work satisfaction and profitability. Therefore, it is important that organizations as well as nations monitor,

evaluate, and supplement traditional economic measures of welfare and well-being with noneconomic factors that can substantially influence and affect national well-being. We believe that it is time to grant well-being a prominent place in the quest for sustained, enduring happiness and life satisfaction within the context of worksite wellness and health promotion efforts. There is much benefit associated with new paradigms of well-being.

The fields of health promotion, health education, preventive health, and health management are changing and perspectives are merging. No longer can we afford to simply rely on activity-centered programming to produce the health and economic results that employers desire and need. But how do we define this broader context for human investment, or operationalize the concept of well-being? This article seeks to bridge the gap between our science and practice in this area, and, even more challenging, to create a paradigm of well-being that has the potential to supplant fitness as the core component of wellness. This article is intended as a call for action to health promotion practitioners, as well as those they serve, to enjoy life; to live with meaning, engagement, hope, and purpose; and to recognize the empowerment, joy, and abundance life has to offer through a holistic and authentically happy approach. Our approach to well-being is to see it as a central facet of wellness—not simply a goal that we strive to achieve, but rather a springboard, a literal wellspring, with which we can catalyze the capacity to fully enjoy all that life has to offer.

This is the central focus of the proposed new paradigm of wellness. The connective power of people, the connection to meaning and purpose of life, and at the very core, fundamental basics of life satisfaction and the discovery of personal strengths to assist in building the well-being dimension of personal health, while enhancing life satisfaction and bringing about a more robust standard of intentional living.

The Changing Paradigms of Health

In 1998, Allen defined health as an ever-changing and dynamic condition composed of physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, cultural, and vocational dimensions.³ The definitions of health that are prevalent today in our field include this type of approach to multiple dimensions of wellness. This perspective alone has done much to broaden awareness that health is more than just being physically well.

Well-being (i.e., people’s positive evaluation of their lives) has been defined as including positive emotions, engagement, satisfaction, and meaning.⁴ Can nonmedical factors, such as functions of the mind, help people resist illness and have greater well-being? There is certainly suggestive evidence that changing thoughts changes brain physiology and thus changes biological function. It is possible that inclusion of positive psychology practices within the workplace as a human capital investment



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strategy may represent a significant advancement in work-site wellness and health promotion.

Some health promotion leaders not only commit to economic return and organizational improvements, but also include a commitment to broader social goals, recognizing that work, in and of itself, should be a defining factor of one's life that is enjoyable, meaningful, engaging, and fulfilling.

Lester Breslow, in a 2006 article in the *American Journal of Public Health*,⁵ described "health eras" and defined the following three historical perspectives: the communicable era, the chronic era, and the fruitful living era. In this day and age, we are certainly living in the chronic era, in which health risks and chronic disease are causing more premature disability and death than ever before.⁵ However, in this visionary article, Dr. Breslow indicates that a new era is around the corner, one of fruitful living and extended longevity. This era may well enable us to make significant contributions to quality of life and lifelong productivity, characterized by intentional living that produces positive health outcomes and a new level of hope-filled living.

The emerging area of *positive psychology* is helping define business success and can no longer be overlooked in health promotion. Positive psychology can be categorized into three main areas: positive emotions, positive traits, and positive institutions. Positive emotions are characterized by hope, gratitude, and optimism. Positive traits are characterized as virtues and strengths and also as abilities such as intelligence and athleticism. Positive institutions are described as democracy, strong families, and free inquiry, and they support the virtues that in turn support the positive emotions.⁶ This pioneering work by Martin Seligman charts a new course and permission to look at health from strength-based paradigms, and not merely from the perspective of a communicable or chronic disease.

The effects of positive psychology, "authentic happiness," and "good business" on the health and well-being of individuals and organizations brings a new and much-needed paradigm for health promotion practitioners to embrace. The archetype of business-effective productivity and efficient production and consumption—has been the traditional gauge of prosperity and successful business enterprise. Reflecting this, typical benchmarks of success in health promotion have been measured in health risk reduction in a workforce, enhanced productivity, reduced health costs, or increased company retention of quality employees. But in our search for economic gain, are we forgetting something? Desirable outcomes in the workplace, even economic ones, are often caused by health improvement and increased well-being rather than the other way around. Therefore, there is value in the pursuit of well-being, particularly when that includes positive psychology practices in the workplace, addressing prosperity, economic success, enhanced quality of life, and determined or intentional life practices.

The Changing Focus of Health Care

Health care and health care delivery have historically been consumed with the phenomenon of illness and have done a fairly effective job of identifying risk factors that are associated with illness and injury. Because of this sickness-based approach and focus, we are aware that risk factors such as tobacco use, dietary intake, sedentary lifestyle, drug and alcohol abuse, and unsafe practices can lead to a host of potential illnesses. The health care system is often referred to as misdirected, yet it is the result of a host of intentional and unintentional choices made by all the major stakeholder groups. It will likely take generations to change, but a systems-wide change is required. Why is it that wellness incentives are often not tax-advantaged, whereas being 90 pounds over a healthy weight is often a ticket to a fully paid-for gastric bypass? Many of our societal incentives are not currently aligned with the goals of prevention, but rather are aligned with the goals of a treatment-based health care system.

The primary focal point of the field of health promotion has historically been to reduce, eliminate, or control as many health risk factors as possible. Health promotion practitioners are often tasked with focusing on steering clients into lifestyle behaviors that enhance good health. This is still an important task and we are not advocating discarding it. However, increasing evidence is that we are missing a vital link to well-being in these efforts. For example, a noted heart specialist, Dr. Dean Ornish, found that patients who only made changes in diet had twice as many cardiac events (including deaths, heart attacks, bypass operations, and angioplasties) as patients who also received training in building relationships and connections.⁷ Another study on coronary heart disease (CHD) found that men who were more optimistic in their explanatory style (i.e., viewing the glass as half full) were more likely to have a lower risk of CHD.⁸ Cardiologist Mimi Guarneri, in *The Heart Speaks: A Cardiologist Reveals the Secret Language of Healing*,⁹ reveals her commitment to learning about healing of stressful lifestyle factors associated with heart attack victims, and even prevention through connection and hardiness.

These same authors discuss many other research studies, finding a link "between pessimism, hopelessness, and risk of heart disease."⁸ Focusing on the medical or clinical components of health and health care delivery will always be important, but by limiting our focus to the clinical dimensions, we often miss the rest of the story. For example, one medical and social historian stated that social and psychological variables have been overlooked in the history of our health gains:

The history of rapid health gains in the United States is not unique: the rate at which death rates have

Table 1
Ray's Health Care Models

Components of Health Care Models	Past	Future
Focus	Fighting sickness	Building health
Emphasis	Environmental factors	Behavioral factors
Cause of disease	Pathogen	Host-pathogen interaction
Patient role	Passive recipient of treatment	Active in treatment and health
Belief system of patient	Irrelevant	Critically important
Physician role	Determiner of treatment and healing process	Collaborator in treatment and healing process

fallen is even more rapid in more recently modernizing countries. The usual explanation for this dramatic improvement—better medical care, nutrition, or clean water—provide only partial answers. More important in explaining the decline in death worldwide is the rise of hope and decline in despair and hopelessness.⁹

The transformation of how we view the relationship between our mind and good health and our mind and disease has been called a revolution by some. This transformation can be seen in health care models explained by Oakley Ray.¹⁰ Ray states that in the past, health care has relied on the biomedical model, which was focused on fighting sickness or illness with an arsenal of weapons such as drugs and surgery. According to Ray, the way of the future, called the biopsychosocial model, is giving health care direction that will take us into the next major era of health and wellness. See Table 1 for a summary of the proposed transformation and the new perspective provided by Ray.

With this new model, health promotion will become increasingly vital to health care. As seen in Table 1, building health is the future of health care. The concept of building health is something that health promotion was founded on. However, by focusing only on influencing risk factors to do this, we will miss an important link to the future of health care, which is also recognizing that the mind (i.e., the belief system of a patient) is critical to the desired outcome of improved health and well-being. We believe that positive psychology provides many of the needed answers and will provide health promotion with the framework and direction to develop interventions that not only help people maintain and become healthier, but also contribute to greater happiness and well-being throughout life.

Can Changing Your Mind Improve Your Health?

Following a similar path to that of health care, clinical psychology is also in the process of shifting its focus from pathology, victimology, and mental illness to positive psychology. There are many opportunities within health

promotion to utilize this perspective with a clear emphasis on well-being.

The link between positive thoughts and emotions and good health is substantial. For many, the driver of health is centered on the thoughts in the mind. In fact, the famous icon of leadership, John Maxwell, believes so strongly in the power of intentional thinking that he uses many examples in his writing that highlight how behavior can be affected in extraordinary ways by thought life.

Research is increasingly demonstrating that psychological and social factors, in addition to behavioral ones, are predictive of a host of illnesses and biological outcomes. That is, how we view the world can be predictive of health outcomes. For example, pessimists have been shown to be ill twice as many days and to have four times as many doctor visits in a year as optimists. Interestingly, these studies showed that pessimists were less able to fight infectious diseases such as the common cold, sore throats, flu, pneumonia, ear infections, venereal diseases, and mononucleosis. Optimists have also been found to live longer, recover faster from surgery, and have lower mortality for cancer and fewer chronic illnesses than pessimists.¹¹ Other research has also supported the effects of emotions on the immune system.¹² In his work over several decades, psychologist Seligman has consistently found real physiological differences between pessimists and optimists. In one study, he and his colleagues measured the disease-fighting cells in the blood of 300 people whose average age was 71, and the optimists had significantly healthier immune systems.¹³

In regard to cancer, surgery, and many other health-related outcomes, optimists do better. One reason might be that the optimist “tends to do more toward prevention and respond more actively if they do become ill. They tend to exercise better health behaviors. And if they get sick, they respond in a more positive way by getting more sleep, decreasing workloads, visiting with the physician, and following the physician’s orders.”¹³ This protective health effect appears to be evident in times of positive emotions, but also in times of personal turmoil.

Conversely, negative emotions such as depression, anger, and anxiety are predictive of greater frequency and severity of illness and death, especially from heart disease. High

levels of negative emotions and chronic stress, along with hostility, can lead to a two- to seven-fold increase in risk for mortality, from heart disease and a host of other illnesses. New research is emerging that suggests that positive emotions may counter some of these effects.¹⁴

Promoting Strengths Instead of Weaknesses

Medical professions focus largely on physical illness, whereas the field of clinical psychology focuses on mental illness, both by researching risk factors and how to prevent or eliminate risk factors associated with the illnesses. According to Seligman, focusing on weaknesses or risks alone is like a “half baked potato.” His research on personal strengths suggests that people can move far beyond and into wellness with a focus on strengths, gifts, talents, and virtues.

Should health promotion focus only on fixing personal weaknesses? Do we spend too much time on changing people’s deficits, whether poor diet, lack of exercise, or unhealthy addictions? If so, we are not alone. Clifton and Nelson¹⁵ state that we are a nation that is obsessed with fixing what is wrong:

- Business managers spend most of their time working with weakest performers and zeroing in on mistakes.
- Parents and teachers focus on students’ lowest grades rather than on their highest.
- Bankers and credit grantors make credit judgments bases on negative credit history.
- All our country’s social work is focused on problems instead of on helping people to become self-sufficient.

So what? Do we really need to limit our focus on fixing what is wrong in order to help people adopt healthy lifestyles? To some extent, focusing only on weaknesses in people comes with a hefty price. We spend enormous amounts of time and money getting people to work on their weaknesses, yet the rates of losing weight and keeping it off, quitting smoking and drinking, and exercising regularly are disappointingly low. This isn’t to say that we should ignore people’s weaknesses. However, it is clear that something is missing in our approach as it is identified in the fields of health care and clinical psychology. A strengths-based approach would start with finding out what people’s strengths are and then using these to manage or affect the weaknesses, not to simply ignore them. Studies of people who were taught their top five strengths, received detailed instructions for how to use these strengths in new ways, and practiced their strengths found these people to be significantly happier and less depressed than the placebo group.¹⁵ For a valuable resource on how to find and cultivate your own strengths and others, read *Soar With Your Strengths*.¹⁵

Positive psychology focuses on strengths rather than on weaknesses or difficulties, and identifies factors that allow

Table 2
Signature Strengths

Virtue	Strength
Wisdom and knowledge	1. Curiosity/interest in the world
	2. Love of learning
	3. Judgment/critical thinking/open-mindedness
	4. Ingenuity/originality/practical intelligence/street smarts
	5. Social intelligence/personal intelligence/emotional intelligence
	6. Perspective
Courage	7. Valor and bravery
	8. Perseverance/industry/diligence
	9. Integrity/genuineness/honesty
Humanity and Love	10. Kindness and generosity
	11. Loving and allowing oneself to be loved
Justice	12. Citizenship/duty/teamwork/loyalty
	13. Fairness and equity
Temperance	14. Leadership
	15. Self-control
	16. Prudence/discretions/caution
	17. Humility and modesty
Transcendence	18. Appreciation of beauty and excellence
	19. Gratitude
	20. Hope/optimism/future-mindedness
	21. Spirituality/sense of purpose/faith/religiousness
	22. Forgiveness and mercy
	23. Playfulness and humor
	24. Zest/passion/enthusiasm

individuals, communities, and societies to flourish. Martin Seligman, well-known researcher and advocate of authentic happiness and positive psychology, teaches that happiness can be cultivated by identifying and using many of the strengths that we already possess—including kindness, originality, humor, optimism, and generosity. By frequently calling upon “signature strength: in all the critical realms of life, people not only develop natural buffers against misfortune and the experience of negative emotion, they move their lives up to a new more positive plane.”¹⁶

Through research, 24 signature strengths have been identified that, when nurtured throughout our lives, provide benefits to our health, relationships, and career. As noted in Table 2, these 24 strengths can be categorized under six virtues. The individual strengths provide routes to displaying or expressing these virtues. Seligman has provided access to his VIA Strengths Survey on his website (www.authentic happiness.org). After taking the 25-minute survey, you will get instant feedback on your strengths and how they compare to those of others who have completed the assessment.

Seligman’s work provides us with the opportunity to identify signature personal strengths. Recent research has

also found five key strengths that are more related to well-being than other strengths: hope, love, zest, gratitude, and curiosity.¹⁷ For health promotion practitioners, the challenge will be how to foster and harness these strengths to promote optimal health.

Expanding Our Definition of Health

Health has been traditionally defined as the absence of illness. If you weren't ill, you were healthy. However, when you focus only on illness, you miss the opportunity of building the health states that make life worth living. And in fact, you miss valuable opportunities to anchor wellness in new paradigms of hope and strength. As mentioned earlier, in the last few years in the field of psychology there has been a change from a singular focus on mental illness and how to relieve these disorders, to how to identify and cultivate a person's most fundamental strengths in order to help the person achieve well-being and happiness. As new evidence is emerging for the need to consider the mind of the individual in health care, our definition of health will of necessity need to change. Listed below are two precepts that have implications for intervention strategies within the field of health promotion.

- Health is having contentedness, peace, joy, healthy relationships, financial security, happiness, and comfort.¹⁸
- Health is the ability to survive change and have resiliency in times of turmoil.

Both of these expanded aspects of health emphasize that positive psychology needs to have a place in the field of health promotion. Using the previously mentioned positive psychology precepts identified by Seligman, we might expand our definition of health as having:

- Satisfaction about the past
- Happiness in the present
- Optimism about the future.⁴

Using these precepts, we can then educate ourselves and others about well-being anchored in personal strength and virtues, gifts and talents, and a meaningful, purposeful, and joyful life. The connection includes and then goes beyond mind/body/spirit wellness. Rather, it is mind/body connection with a purpose—a possible purpose to serve and love one another; to make meaningful contributions in our life, work, and play; and to revitalize our societies with social capital and thrive with human connections.¹⁹ As the fields of medicine and psychology change their definition of health, the field of health promotion may be able to provide insight and a meaningful contribution to the change.

Health promotion has been defined within the *American Journal of Health Promotion* as the

science and art of helping people change their lifestyle to move toward a state of optimal health. Optimal health is defined as a balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health. Lifestyle change can be facilitated through a combination of efforts to enhance awareness, change behavior, and create environments that support good health practices. Of the three, supportive environments will probably have the greatest impact in producing lasting change.²⁰

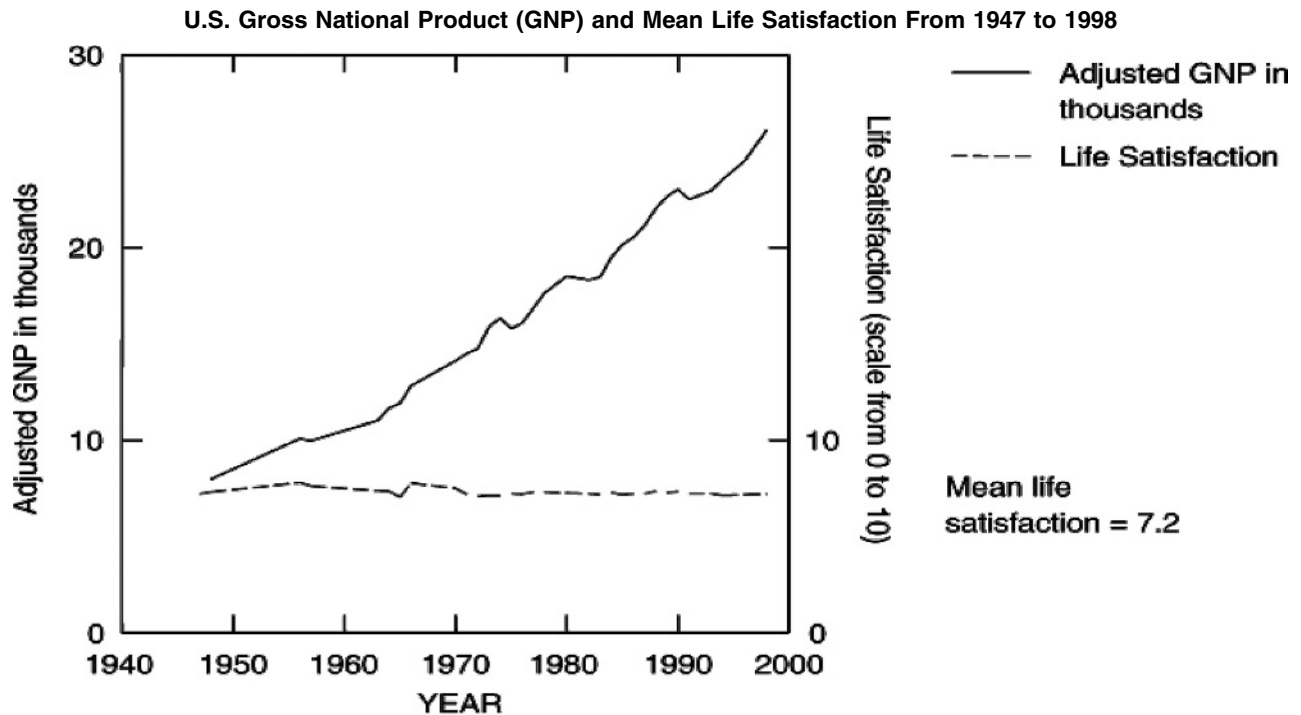
We see positive psychology as a strategy that potentially gives health promotion a perspective and a set of tangible tools for helping people reach their own state of optimal health.

The Economy of Well-being

Still not convinced that business should take an interest in well-being as a mechanism for economic growth? Or that life satisfaction and fruitful living impact the bottom line and are reasons for improved health outcomes and fresh hope? Consider that in a recent poll, people rank happiness and satisfaction ahead of money as a life goal. These noneconomic issues need serious exploration. Money is related to well-being only to the extent that basic needs are met. As societies grow wealthy, well-being is associated with factors such as social relationships and enjoyment at work. There is evidence that as societies become wealthier, they often experience an increase in mental and social problems and a plateau in life satisfaction. Economic measures have seriously failed to provide a full account of the impact of prosperity on quality of life. Although economic progress can enhance quality of life, it no longer serves as a strong single barometer of well-being, because there are substantial discrepancies between economic indices and other qualitative measures. Well-being must be assessed more directly, because there are distressingly large measurable gaps between economic indicators and well-being. Measurement of life satisfaction against gross national product suggests that although the production of goods and services has increased by thousands of dollars per citizen, the reporting of life satisfaction has remained stable²¹ (Figure 1).

Where we work and how we work determine to a large extent what our lives are like. Ask anyone in the workplace, and regardless of job occupation, it boils down to fulfillment, purpose, or even social support that creates job retention. The way we make a living, the jobs we have, and the way our work is rewarded have a tremendous bearing on our lives, and how we feel about ourselves, whether content and peaceful, or insecure and miserable. What if health and livelihood derived from work were a springboard to serving one another, caring about humanity, and defining a life that is enjoyable, meaningful, engaging, and fulfilling—in addition, creating a desire and purpose to serve and love one another and to make meaningful contributions in our life, work, and play?

Figure 1



Balancing Consumption and Meaningfulness Within Your Life's Purpose

Ask any manager, leader, or chief executive officer about what they perceive to be important in business and they will usually mention bottom-line economics and sustainability of company services through continued capital growth and investment security. This, in and of itself, is vital to the measurement of success of any company or entity participating in today's competitive economy. However, could there be some context, or some model of good business, that includes a meaningful life in which work and the pursuit of financial rewards can find their proper balance? Can there be both business success and a commitment to broader social goals in and outside of the workplace? Are the two pursuits mutually exclusive, or is it possible to bring both together in the management of our work organizations? We believe that it is imperative that our measurement of business success be based on both types of indicators: those that reflect economic achievement alongside of those that reflect high levels of meaning and purpose in the lives of those who are employed in such organizations. In the end, we believe that there will be no significant numbers of "good businesses" in our economy unless we jointly agree that businesses must produce more than economic return.

And who is responsible for charting this new direction? Is it only our business leaders, policy-makers, and those

deemed as influential in our society? Health promotion practitioners have long recognized the benefits of good health practices and have almost effortlessly made the connection to helping others live a quality life in many dimensions. Much of the joy and passion within our profession comes from leading, or rather from facilitating, others to adopt a better life, one with meaning and purpose, and a yearning to serve others. Contributing to good business may ultimately be more fulfilling than most of us realize. Health promotion professionals (as well as all business leaders) need to take a close look at their own organizations and answer the following questions:

- Am I personally committed to improving work life at every level?
- Are a meaningful life and the pursuit of financial rewards in an appropriate balance in my organization?
- Do my actions support work experiences that allow employees to use gifts, talents, strengths, and virtues in making contributions to our organization's goals?
- Does organizational policy promote and reward contributions within and beyond the scope of the organization for humanity and broader societal purposes?

Some New Principles of Good Business?

This article proposes that perhaps a distinguishing trait of leaders in good businesses is a belief in goals that benefit

not only themselves, but others as well. A *good business* could then be defined as an organization that makes an acceptable level of profit to owners or shareholders (or delivers acceptable services at a reasonable cost, if in the public or nonprofit sector), while at the same time tangibly contributing to human happiness and well-being.

A vision or perhaps a calling beyond narrow self-interest, directed at the common good, has the potential to motivate people to place greater levels of effort on the organizations' behalf. This good business visionary leader recognizes the well-being of the soul of the organization, and consistently advocates for leaders, managers, and workers to move from a purely self-centered position to serve, with meaning and purpose, self, others, and society. According to Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, author of the book *Good Business*, there are three main types of calling that motivate these good business leaders and serve as guiding principles of good business.²² The first is to do one's best, the second is to help people, and the third is to build a better world. These principles are explained in more detail below.

1. **The Calling to Do One's Best.** The drive to excel, and to motivate such a drive in others, is a potent force, it is contagious, and it keeps an entire organization focused. This positive energy, when combined, produces synergy allowing for greater creativity, an endless source of innovation, and the precept that there is always a better way to do something. What is imperative in this concept is to realize that every individual has the option to do his or her best. Celebrating good ideas, enhancing positive energy, and recognizing and allowing people to use their strengths and virtues for the betterment of job satisfaction, for economic growth, and to endorse a meaningful and purposeful life beyond the usual call of duty for the organization not only is effective, it can be great.¹⁸
2. **The Calling to Help People.** Although health promotion practitioners often find themselves truly enjoying this aspect of the field, there can be an even greater sense of responsibility that leaders can express, not just to focus on an improved product or service, but also to aid employees, customers, suppliers, colleagues, neighbors, and the community in general in leading a better life. Our profession of health promotion fairly surges with the energy derived from helping people. Many practitioners feel called to this profession because of the deep and personally rewarding joy derived from helping people. Why not harness this reward for everyone else?²³
3. **The Calling to Build a Better World.** Does your current workforce strategically reach out and clearly serve the community, while feeling a sense of obligation to protect the environment that allows us all to survive and prosper? A community, whether defined as a corporate community, a neighborhood, or a large geographically defined area, is only as well as its weakest link. Therefore, the employer community is a critical element

in creating work environments that meet both the financial and well-being needs of its employees and the larger community.²

The question then remains for us: can there be a context of good business that not only achieves positive quarterly economic returns, but also can measure up to and excel at principles of good business? We believe that once business leaders and those influential in changing organizational policy begin to realize that by actively pursuing well-being, their employees and the community can potentially achieve both optimal health and happiness, but also economic growth, they are likely to begin putting well-being as a higher priority in the pursuit of good business.

Practical Applications in Health Promotion

The CDC have categorized six behaviors that cause most of our potentially preventable morbidity and premature mortality:

- Inadequate nutritional intake
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Tobacco use
- Unintentional and intentional injury
- High risk sexual behaviors, HIV, and STDs
- Drug and alcohol abuse.

Perhaps, as we correlate these behaviors to most of our other causes of morbidity and premature mortality, we need to rethink these causes and ask ourselves, what are the causes of the causes? Are they loneliness, stress, time management, isolation, low self-esteem, depression, perhaps a hunger for greater life satisfaction or meaning? We believe that it is time to ask: What are the real causes? The real underlying "why" of a behavior or risk? What causes someone to engage in high risk sexual behaviors? Or alcohol abuse? What barriers are in the lives of people who cannot adhere to regular physical fitness regimens for good health? Or cannot successfully lose unhealthy weight? Is it really education alone?²⁴

Today's business leaders are among the most influential members of society. Leaders who recognize employee well-being as important to the workplace create a sense of meaningful contribution and hopefulness. However, they must be willing to redefine capital in terms that include and recognize people as human capital and health promotion as the wise thing to do, including intentional efforts to enhance well-being and its connection to economic return.

Health promotion and fitness practitioners already recognize and appreciate the value of a lifestyle that includes health-enhancing behaviors. Taking it farther than the individual level, we believe that all of us are called to make the world a better place, and realize that we are in this together. If a business or public sector organization makes the pursuit of well-being and "good business"

a formal part of their strategic plan, it will require a formal societal commitment to these broader social goals. Individuals need to be encouraged and allowed to feel joy, gratitude, meaning, and happiness as part of the work experience. To achieve, this the time has come for organizational leaders, influential leaders, visionary leaders, and “called” leaders to put forth the effort and emphasize the long-term commitment to addressing well-being issues so that our work organizations can move from effectiveness to greatness.

Health promotion professionals can assist in this process by raising these issues for discussion and consideration, and by educating policy makers in the implications and advantages of supporting the pursuit of well-being in the context of worksite health promotion programming. They can also contribute by being willing to test these newer paradigms of wellness and health promotion with entire populations or subpopulations.

Conclusion

As we think about desirable outcomes in health promotion and business, we are missing a vital piece if we ignore well-being as a human capital investment strategy in bottom-line-oriented “good business.” The new paradigms of wellness, anchored in strengths, not deficits, and driven by commitment to a better world and making meaningful and purposeful contributions at work, in life, and for the next generation, bring a new sense of energy to defining wellness. Current research describing health as a capacity, as a potential, and as long and fruitful living should not go unheeded. We are rapidly moving into new paradigms of health that provide for enduring health and economic outcomes and fresh hope. To provide individuals who are ready to change a key health behavior the opportunity to build on strengths versus weaknesses may very well bring us to the same outcomes, but with the very desirable by-products of new hope and renewal.

The emerging science of happiness as a formal area of psychology suggests that people high in well-being tend to earn higher incomes and perform better at work than people who report low well-being. Job satisfaction and positive mood at work both contribute to the productivity of organizations. Happy employees are better organizational citizens than unhappy employees, they tend to change jobs less frequently, and their reduced presenteeism losses may well lead to greater personal productivity. Bottom line: the costs of unhappy workers to work productivity are enormous. Rethinking health promotion through the lenses of emerging research in positive psychology, psychological capital enhancement, and “good business” principles has the potential to create a new vision of how to define,

promote, and measure health and well-being. As we move into Breslow’s “era of fruitful living,” shouldn’t our state of well-being be viewed as a capacity and simultaneously as a valuable catalyst to serve and love one another, and to do so impelled by a positive collective purpose? We believe both that it is an appropriate goal and that it is time for this change.

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